

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR
SUBJECT Duties of a Soviet Railroad Station Master

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1. [redacted] Soviet railroads [redacted]
[redacted] Confusion and inefficiency were prevalent, and probably still are [redacted]
[redacted] The constant changing of norms or standards brought about a situation where confusion and inefficiency were always present. Then, too, administrative officials, such as station masters of large stations, were constantly harrassed by interference from Communist Party officials, Trade Union officials and NKVD personnel. None of these was experienced in railroad matters, yet all were encouraged to take an interest in administrative matters in order to facilitate the fulfillment of "plans". Actually, they interfered to such an extent that efficiency was greatly impaired.
2. The station master had the complete responsibility for the reporting of all administrative matters. Of utmost importance were the reports of statistics and the evaluation of work completed by the individual stations. The work performed by each station is measured by the following:
- a. Average turnover of cars.
 - b. Average daily mileage of locomotives.
 - c. Average daily loadings.
 - d. Average load per car axle.
 - e. Fulfillment of daily norms, as they pertain to the exchange of cars between railroads.
 - f. Number of accidents and breakdowns.
 - g. Fulfillment of daily norms on loading operations.
- The reports necessary covered all phases of the work performed.
3. The loading operations at the train station were the responsibility of the station master. The manpower needed for this operation was connected with the railroad whereas the manpower for loading at industrial plants and agencies was connected with that particular industry or agency. The

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station master was given schedules for the loading and unloading of all types of materials. These schedules were prepared by the Ministry of Transportation and were handed on to the station by the headquarters of the system. These schedules included the time allowed for industry. For example, a carload of coal was to be loaded by a crew of loaders in two hours; a carload of lime, loose, six hours and in sacks, three hours; building stone, three hours, etc. If certain materials were shipped direct to a plant in the area of the station, it was the responsibility of the plant manager to see that the material was unloaded on time. If it was not, the plant manager was fined by the station manager, who could fine from one to five rubles per hour that the car was held up. The fines depended upon the size of the car and the materials to be unloaded. For instance, a small car of ordinary materials would carry a fine of one ruble per hour. The schedule of fines was made up by the Ministry. If a particular plant manager was responsible for three or four different violations, the station manager could report him to the railroad headquarters who would then call the plant manager into court for trial.

4. There was a constant struggle between the using agencies and the railroads to obtain a better utilization of rolling stock. The relation between the bigger using agencies and the officials was very formal as was true of almost all administrative matters in the USSR. It was necessary for the using agencies to go through channels in order to obtain rolling stock needed for the shipment of its goods. The system was complicated and obscure and there was no room for flexibility. There was no method for taking care of emergencies, mainly because the station manager feared taking upon himself the responsibility for any deviation from the plan.
5. In order for the using agency to obtain the freight cars it needed for shipment of goods, it was necessary for the agency to submit a requisition for cars at least 30 days in advance of the date planned for the shipment of materials. Such shipments by industry were always in accordance with the plan [Five-Year Plan], which called for certain production fulfillments on certain dates for each particular industry. A copy of the portion of the plan as it pertained to the industry, had to be attached to the requisition for cars. The requisition submitted had to set forth the type of cargo, the weight, the station of departure, the station of destination, and the exact date and time when the cars would be needed. The requisition was then submitted to the nearest station master or was sent directly to the administrative offices of the railroad system which covered the area. At the end of each month, the station master would receive from the chief of the administrative system a plan of loading of cars for the coming month. Any requests for additional cars or any other activities over and above this plan could be authorized by the chief of the administrative system only, and then only in the event cars were available.
6. It was the responsibility of the station master to see that the plan of shipment or loading was adhered to. He would be furnished with the necessary number of cars in accordance with the plan and would arrange for the delivery at the plant at the time needed. The station master could not be held responsible by the using agency for any failure to fulfill scheduled shipments by not having cars available; this was the sole responsibility of the railroad system itself. Because of the necessity of strict adherence to the loading plan, many slowdowns in all transactions resulted. As an example, many collective farms would have perishables ready for the market which they would be unable to ship because of a scarcity of cars.
7. Attached to each major station in the USSR were several dispatchers; headed by a chief dispatcher. The average number of dispatchers was between four and five and they worked on a 24-hour basis. Each station was provided with an office which had direct telephone wires installed connecting

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that office with the various stations in the section. The dispatchers continuously wore headphones in order to listen in on all conversations. This enabled them to be aware of all traffic movements on their lines. A dispatcher could break in whenever there was a clear signal. The dispatcher on duty was provided with a log book in which he made entries pertaining to his line. This provided an easy method for a relieving dispatcher to review the log book and obtain the general traffic situation in his section. The log book entries consisted of the time of departure, destination, number of cars per train, type of train, the number of the train, the time of arrival, if it pertained.

8. The adherence to the norms set for loading and unloading operations were always a major problem to the station master. Up until about 1935 as much as 12 to 24 hours were allowed for certain loading and unloading operations. After 1935, the time allowed was reduced to from two to six hours, depending on the type of cargo.
9. Switching operations at each station were also conducted according to schedule. These schedules were made up for each station and were dependent upon the size of the station, the number of sidings, the type of switches and the amount of traffic at the station each day. Based upon these figures, a station was permitted to have so many switching locomotives. As an example, at the Darnitsa station, two switching locomotives. The norm set for the station was 12 cars per hour and a control figure of 576 cars per day was set. If neglected to meet this norm severely criticized and subject to many penalties.
10. It was the responsibility of the station master to work out a plan, and reduce it to writing, of the technological processes covering the complete workings of his station in order to have it available for the duty officer who served under the station master. This plan was drawn up in order to make sure that rolling stock was processed properly, and which in turn would provide for the quickest possible turnover of rolling stock. For example, a maneuvering indicator or control was arrived at by determining the actual switching operations for a particular station. An additional control was set up to provide for the fullest exploitation of all rolling stock, based on the time lost by the cars while they were in the station and the time lost by commercial operations. At Darnitsa, for example, the time lost by cars while in the station was four hours and the time lost through commercial operations was 12 hours. The "oborotny" or turnover time permitted each station was between two and three hours which meant that at a turnover station the rolling stock could not be detained any longer. If the station was a "home station or classification yard, the cars could be kept indefinitely.
11. The following were additional responsibilities of the station master:
 - a. To prevent accidents at the station and to assure the safety of all trains passing through the station.
 - b. To supervise the opening of the passenger ticket booth at scheduled times, usually one hour before train time if there were many passengers; otherwise, one-half hour.
 - c. To see that the luggage of passengers was properly handled.
 - d. To handle all passenger and shipper complaints.
 - e. To supervise the classification of freight cars, which was the duty of the Sostovich Poedof (train assembler).
 - f. To see that user agencies fulfill their part of contracts, including loading and unloading operations, use of sidings and warehouses and any other railroad property.

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- g. To supervise the maintenance of all equipment such as signalling devices, technical equipment, coaling, water and switching facilities.
- h. To make sure that locomotives were turned out of the station according to schedule.
- i. To maintain work discipline among the various employees.
- j. To conduct technical meetings of instruction or training in order to improve the qualifications of the workers.
- k. To hire and fire personnel.
- l. To conduct special sessions with certain employees in order to discuss problems connected with the movement of troops during wartime.
- m. To give lectures on air raids.
- n. To conduct secret correspondence with the mobilization section of the railroad administration on the problems of troop movement and war goods movement through his station.

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